

NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR WORK AND LEARNING

NIWL Apprenticeships

OVERVIEW

FHI 360's National Institute for Work and Learning (NIWL) brings together experts in workforce development to expand existing nationally registered apprenticeship programs (RAPs), such as the Youth Development Practitioner Apprenticeship (YDPA), and develop new opportunities within the care economy. NIWL apprentices will enter care economy roles, such as youth services, peer support, substance-use counseling, and mental health counseling. This national hub is funded by the U.S. Department of Labor's (DOL) Apprenticeship Builds America grant (ABA2), and is part of a broad, bipartisan commitment to expand apprenticeship as a workforce solution.

NIWL's Apprenticeship Programs provide workers an opportunity to build their skillsets in a rewarding career path while also meeting the critically growing need for care economy professionals.

APPRENTICESHIP PORTFOLIO

Through a combination of paid, on-the-job learning and related training instruction over a period of 6 months to 2 years, participants can complete a registered, DOL-credentialed apprenticeship. These apprenticeships are open to both new and existing employees.

NIWL offers apprenticeships in three career paths.



*Apprentices in Lake County, IL, complete kickoff training.
Photo by FHI 360's Daria Earley.*

Youth Development Practitioner Apprenticeships (YDPA):

Participants learn skills such as the positive youth development framework, case management, communication, leadership, and teamwork. Through these skills and on-the-job training, apprentices are prepared for careers in the youth-serving care economy such as youth service intake counselors, after-school programming managers, outreach workers, and justice reentry case workers.

Peer Support Specialist (PSS): The Peer Support Specialist Apprenticeship equips individuals with the skills and training to leverage their personal experiences with personal and societal challenges such as addiction, mental illnesses, re-entry, and more to support individuals in similar situations. Through their work and empathy-centric framework, apprentices will be able to help those coping with a variety of hardships.

Substance Use Disorder and Mental Health

Counselors (SUD MHC): The Substance Use Disorder and Mental Health Counselor apprenticeship provides a unique, thorough, and rewarding path into the care economy. Unlike conventional graduate and undergraduate pathways, apprenticeship training is designed to teach apprentices how to use their lived experiences to develop their skills as counselors. Through this process, the apprenticeship is well-suited to address the shortage of mental health professionals around the country.



“This apprenticeship is the perfect way to learn how to change lives.” – Luis G, YDPA Participant

IMPACT

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the youth development and peer support fields have a projected growth of 13% from 2023 to 2033, with the behavioral health and substance-use disorder counseling industry having 19% growth. Due in part to this growth, the U.S. Health Resources & Services Administration reports that as of Sept. 2024, the mental health field continues to face critical staffing shortages.

Through the NIWL’s Apprenticeships, FHI 360 and its partners commit to building a talent pipeline with multiple points of entry that meets these needs. By providing localized training, the NIWL Apprenticeships empower apprentices to serve their communities.

About NIWL: FHI 360’s National Institute for Work and Learning (NIWL) advances access, equity, and excellence in education and workforce systems. We focus on two key drivers of individual well-being - education and employment - to improve lives. NIWL seeks to strengthen the capacity of public and private organizations, providing information, resources, and support needed to make decisions, strengthen programs, and improve outcomes for individuals.

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NIWL APPRENTICESHIP PARTNERS

- National Association of Workforce Boards
- National Association of Workforce Development Professionals
- National Youth Employment Coalition
- New Ways to Work
- Public Works Alliance
- National Collaborative for Transformative Youth Policy

CONTACT

For more information on the NIWL and its apprenticeships, please contact apprenticeship@fhi360.org

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CONTACT

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